

## Priorities of the Programme for 2020

### 1. *Specific priorities for European Remembrance (Strand 1)*

#### 1.1 *Commemorations of major historical turning points in recent European history*

One of the Europe for Citizens programme's goals is to create opportunities for a debate on European history beyond national perspectives.

Through its Strand 1 (European Remembrance), the Programme aims to foster a common culture of remembrance and mutual understanding between citizens from different EU Member States, notably by supporting projects that reflect on historical turning points and changes in regimes in Europe's 20<sup>th</sup> century and on their continuous importance for the Europe of today.

In 2020, the following commemorations will be eligible for projects:

Year of application	Eligible commemorations
2020	<b>1950</b> Robert Schuman Declaration <b>1990</b> German reunification and democratic transition of other countries in Europe <b>2000</b> Proclamation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

Also, through this strand, the Programme will support projects on promoting the role of Europe's cultural heritage as a pivotal element of cultural diversity, and intercultural dialogue and local heritage linked to European memory.

#### 1.2 *Civil society and civic participation under totalitarian regimes*

Under totalitarian regimes, democratic concepts such as "civil society", "freedom" and "democracy" and "democratic procedures" completely lost their meaning.

Free speech and open public debate, political demonstrations of different political actors, and public gatherings were not allowed. One of the most essential acts of democratic engagement, which is membership in a political party, was also diverted from its natural purpose to prove loyalty toward a leading party and conformity with the ruling political regime.

By contrast, free social movements emanating from the civil society were often ostracised, threatened and repressed. Civil society and democratic movements were absorbed and exploited by the one-party system. Public information was also monopolised and distorted by official institutions. Any diverging view was treated as "dissidence". Free speech was forbidden and independent voices were silenced. Political decisions were applied without democratic deliberation.

Applicants should reflect on the exploitation and manipulations of democratic practices notably by means of "propaganda" and official media in the past and the current upsurge of populism. The objective is to show that civil society, free media and open debate are an indispensable element of democracy.

Through their projects, applicants should also reflect on the significance of contemporary democratic achievements such as rule of law, civil liberties, civic rights, and underline the

fragility of civic rights (freedom of speech, right to vote) without strong checks and balances. The aim is also to debate on the concrete ways and mechanisms by which civil liberties and civic rights can be preserved and civil dialogue ensured at EU and national levels, as well as the impact of the social media in this context.

### ***1.3 Antisemitism, anti-gypsyism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance: drawing the lessons for today***

The 20th century's totalitarianisms deprived some of their citizens from their basic rights to the point of total exclusion, Holocaust and genocide. This was the case for the Jewish and Roma communities as well as other cultural or ethnic minorities under the Nazi regime, including LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual/transgender and intersexual) people. Misleading ideologies and support of deceptive propaganda, exclusionary legislation as well as a repressive apparatus enabled those regimes to commit mass murders.

Past manifestations of antisemitism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance should be analysed and debated so as to inform the present. Through their projects, applicants could address the following themes and questions: How to recognise a "scapegoat" and to deconstruct the discourse leading to exclusion and marginalisation? What are the educational tools at EU and national levels to prevent these forms of intolerance?

### ***1.4 Democratic transition and accession to the European Union***

For Member States that experienced in their recent history a transition to democracy, accession to the European Union played an important role in supporting and consolidating democratisation. For example, through the system of "democratic conditionality", the pre-membership preparations encouraged political changes and structural reforms, strengthened administrative capacity and improved minority protections.

Projects under this specific priority should analyse how the EU accession perspective influenced democratic standards and practices of the new democracies. While taking stock of the enlargements accomplished in the last two decades, the projects could also offer the opportunity to discuss future enlargements or other kinds of partnerships with countries of the EU neighbourhood.

## ***2. Specific priorities for "Democratic engagement and civic participation" (Strand 2)***

### ***2.1 Debating the future of Europe and challenging Euroscepticism***

Under this multi-annual priority of the Europe for Citizens programme, citizens will be given an opportunity to express what kind of Europe they want and to outline their long term vision for the future of European integration. In this context the White Paper on the Future of Europe<sup>1</sup> represents a point of departure.

This debate should be based on the concrete achievements of the European Union and on lessons learnt from history. But it should as well reflect on current trends, and enable participants to challenge Euroscepticism and to suggest possible actions that the European Union could undertake to foster a sense of belonging to Europe, to understand the benefits of the European Union and to reinforce the EU's social and political cohesion.

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<sup>1</sup> See: White Paper on the Future of Europe and the way forward, 1 March 2017; [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/white-paper-future-europe-reflections-and-scenarios-eu27\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/white-paper-future-europe-reflections-and-scenarios-eu27_en)

The debate on the future of Europe should not be limited to those already supporting the idea of the European Union, but also reach out to citizens who reject or put in question the European Union and its achievements, or remain indifferent. The ambitious aim is to try to channel criticism of the EU into a useful, constructive and positive driver for European integration in the long run and to help the EU to come closer to its citizens.

Citizens are invited to take part in this debate through projects or through their active engagement in organisations participating in the Europe for Citizens programme. The Commission expects projects granted under this multi-annual priority to reflect on a new narrative for Europe, citizen-oriented, forward-looking and constructive, that would be more engaging for the younger generation in particular. Projects may be based on the outcome of citizens' consultations and may lead to debates about concrete ways to create a more democratic Union, so as to enable citizens to reengage with the EU and develop a stronger sense of ownership of the European project.

Another aim of projects under this multi-annual priority may be to identify ways of further enhancing the European dimension and the democratic legitimacy of the EU decision-making process. In the light of the low turnout rates in European elections of the past years and the rise of populism in many Member States, projects may address the question how to reach voters, including first time/young voters, or voters living in remote areas and build a momentum for their active democratic participation in the EU at all levels.

Applicants are also invited to organise debates or activities on the rise of Euro-scepticism and its implications for the future of the European Union. Such debates or activities are expected to enable participants to deepen their knowledge of the EU institutions and policies, and better understand the EU's achievements and benefits, as well as to understand the cost of not being part of the European Union.

## ***2.2 Promoting solidarity as a basic concept***

The European Union is built on solidarity: solidarity between its citizens, solidarity across borders between its Member States, and solidarity through support actions inside and outside the Union. Solidarity is a shared value which creates cohesion and responds to societal challenges such as the recent refugee and migration crisis.

The notion of solidarity is intrinsically linked to the concept of generosity, but also to those of reciprocity and responsibility. But what does solidarity mean within the European Union, especially in times of crisis? What are the legal, political, economic and even ethical limits of European solidarity? The unprecedented arrivals of migrants and refugees in recent years in particular have put Europe's solidarity to the test.

Under this multi-annual priority of the Europe for Citizens programme, citizens will be given the opportunity to discuss the topic of solidarity and to assess existing solidarity mechanisms inside the EU. They shall reflect on policy areas where such common mechanisms are already existing or could be useful while considering other possible channels of European solidarity like volunteering, donations, foundations, civil society organisations, charities, crowdfunding, etc.

One aspect of the discussion will be to highlight the added value of the EU's intervention in times of crisis, as was demonstrated in the case of the refugee and migration crisis, when national responses seem insufficient, while underlining the limits of such solidarity mechanisms in terms of responsibility and financial cost. Projects developed under this multi-annual priority will contribute to overcoming national perceptions by fostering mutual

understanding and by creating fora where common solutions can be discussed in a constructive way. Their aim should be to raise awareness of the importance of reinforcing the European integration process based on solidarity and common values.

### ***2.3 Fostering intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding and combatting the stigmatisation of migrants and minority groups***

Intercultural dialogue is essentially the exchange of views and opinion between cultures. It seeks to establish linkages and common ground between different cultures, communities and people by promoting understanding and interaction. Intercultural dialogue helps avoiding conflict and the marginalisation of citizens on the basis of their cultural identity. The Europe for Citizens Programme contributes to promoting intercultural dialogue by bringing people of different nationalities and different languages together and by giving them the opportunity to participate in common activities.

Projects granted under this multi-annual priority will raise awareness on the richness of the cultural and linguistic environment in Europe and promote mutual understanding and tolerance, thereby contributing to the development of a respectful, dynamic and multifaceted European identity.

Under this multi-annual priority a specific focus will be put on the situation of migrants in our society. Today, in the European Union, extremist or populist movements regularly stigmatise "others", "migrants" or "minorities" in their political discourse, amalgamating distinct concepts (crisis and migration; terrorism and migration) in order to polarise public opinion and to claim moral monopoly.

Against this background, the Europe for Citizens programme through this multi-annual priority will fund projects promoting diversity, tolerance and the respect of common values. Projects will in particular encourage intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between EU citizens and migrants. These projects will help overcome stereotypes about migrants by deconstructing past and present processes of stigmatisation.